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Chevrolet's GM cousins at Buick and Oldsmobile. No other manufacturer had the boldness to offer that high a rating in the entire era. The LS6 option caused a sensation that continues through today, 45 years later. It was rare then, representing less than 1 percent of the total 1970 Chevelle production, and it is even rarer now. A quick check of the dedicated website for LS6 registry reveals that only 146 are currently identified.

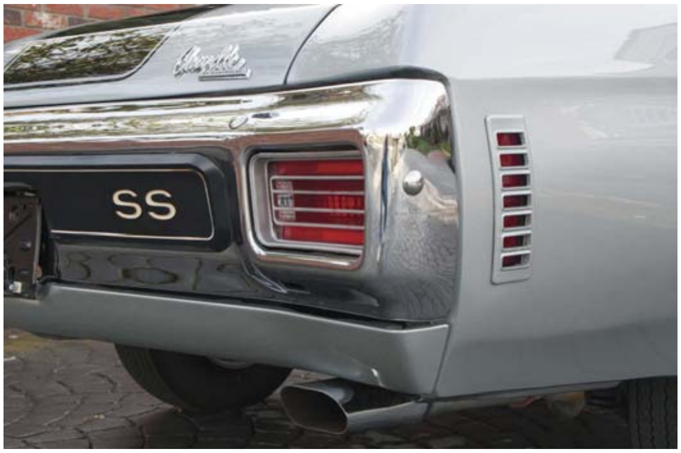
With only a few thousand originally built, how could this number of documented survivors now be so small? The attrition factor of vehicles raced for over four decades on dark remote highways and/or sanctioned tracks, took its toll on engines, drivetrains and sheet metal. They were cars. Muscle cars. Built to test who was the undisputed king of the road wherever the venue might be: stoplights, two lanes or racetracks. While the high-performance engines, heavy-duty transmissions and positraction rear axles, were capable enough, not all drivers were. Breakage from missed shifts often meant engine or transmission replacement. A known phrase, proven again and again during many exhibitions of speed on the blacktop, is that all the big, heavy, high-horsepower, muscle cars were typically "faster than their brakes," even if equipped with the front disc brake option. The

■ **Discreet emblem on front fenders was the only indication that this SS was equipped with a 454 engine, yet the LS6 option remains a secret. Tires of the era were sized by letters. Polyglas was a desirable performance tire.**

COWL INDUCTION

LS6 Chevelles that survived all the mechanical carnage and wrecks are considered in today's collector market as the Holy Grail. In 2006, the most successful drag racing 1970 LS6 Chevelle in history went on the block at a Scottsdale auction, and after frenzied bidding a sale was hammered at $1.2 million.

Bill Maya confesses, "My first impression of a high-horsepower 1970 Chevelle was during a ride in the late 1970s from a friend of a friend." While he wasn't offered a chance to get behind the wheel, "I liked the drive, and



Side marker lamps were becoming more stylized with each model. The rectangular theme continued in the 1970-only taillights.

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I liked the noise. That experience stayed with me. After that, I always wanted one."

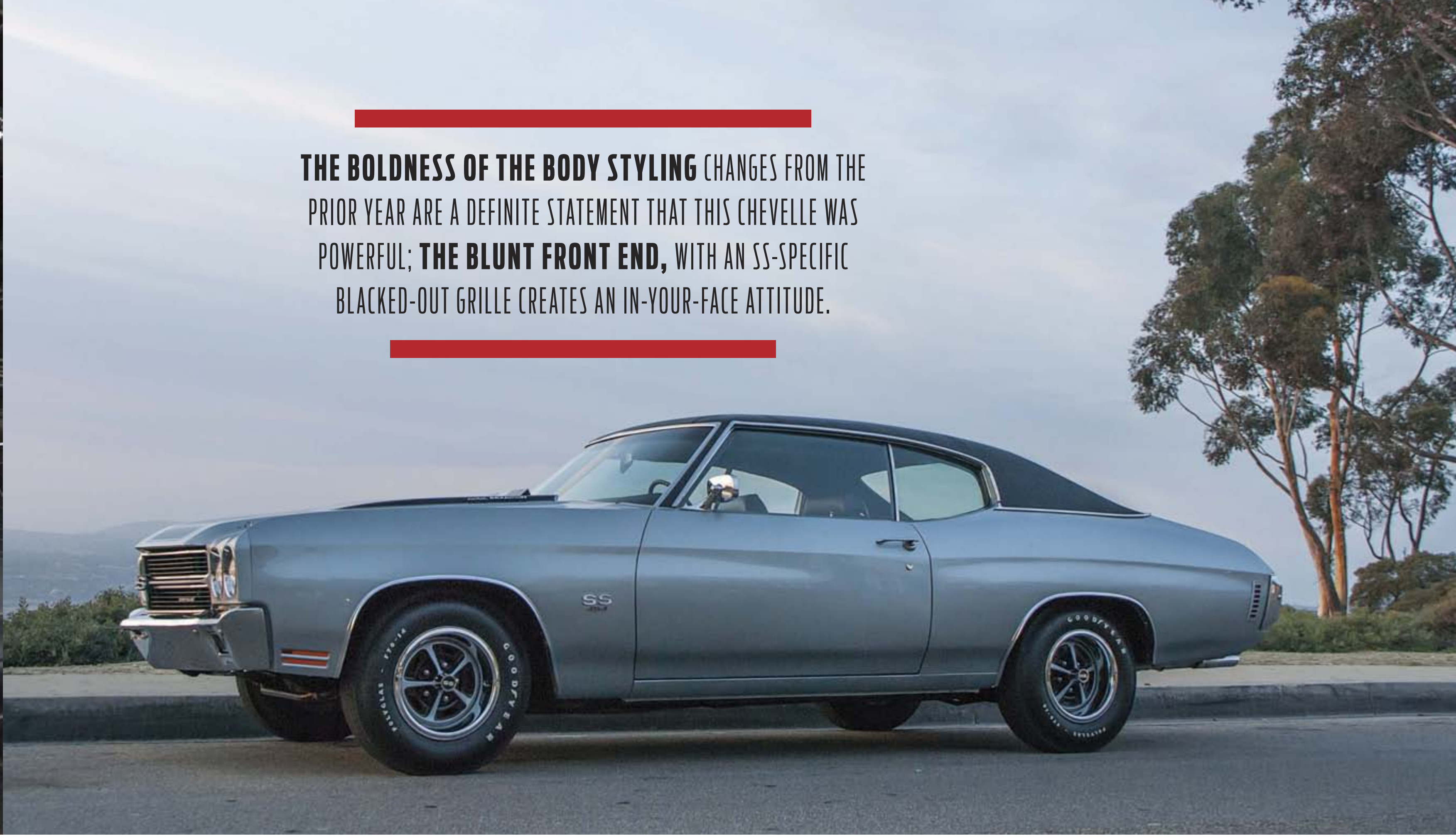
Twenty years ago, Bill and his wife Kim were in a position to start collecting cars, always seeking out the most impeccable examples of what they liked. "In 2008, during a visit to a classic car auction in Monterey during Speed Week," he stumbled upon his dream Chevelle. "After checking it out thoroughly, I learned that this LS6 had just been restored to perfection. It had only two miles on it since finished. Kim encouraged me to bid on the car," he says.

Their LS6 is a numbers-matching example. It came with the build sheet that revealed it was built in the Leeds plant in Kansas City, Missouri, and delivered to Witte Chevrolet in Blue Island, Illinois. It was produced in Cortez Silver, with black SS stripes, along with the optional black vinyl roof. Studying the original build sheet makes Maya wish that he could "find and talk with the first owner, as someone specified the performance options," he concedes, "including the LS6 engine, along with the M-22 4-speed that was the mandatory heavy-duty version if a manual transmission was selected to back up the 450-bhp engine." Positraction and the performance axle ratio were also checked off boxes during the ordering process. The ZL2 ducted hood, boldly labeled as Cowl Induction, has a special flap that opens to allow outside fresh air access to the sealed air cleaner when the pedal is stomped to the metal. While all SS Chevelles featured a dedicated hood design, the highly desirable Cowl Induction option is much rarer.

"The impeccable restoration is what really caught our attention," admits Maya. All the markings that were affixed during the 1970 factory assembly are preserved or were painstakingly duplicated during the restoration process. The

This is a high option example, as indicated by the bucket seats and center console. The dashboard is all business for a factory muscle car, with a full complement of gauges. The clock still works!

No restoration is complete without detailed attention to upholstery and cabin touch points.



THE BOLDNESS OF THE BODY STYLING CHANGES FROM THE PRIOR YEAR ARE A DEFINITE STATEMENT THAT THIS CHEVELLE WAS POWERFUL; **THE BLUNT FRONT END,** WITH AN SS-SPECIFIC BLACKED-OUT GRILLE CREATES AN IN-YOUR-FACE ATTITUDE.

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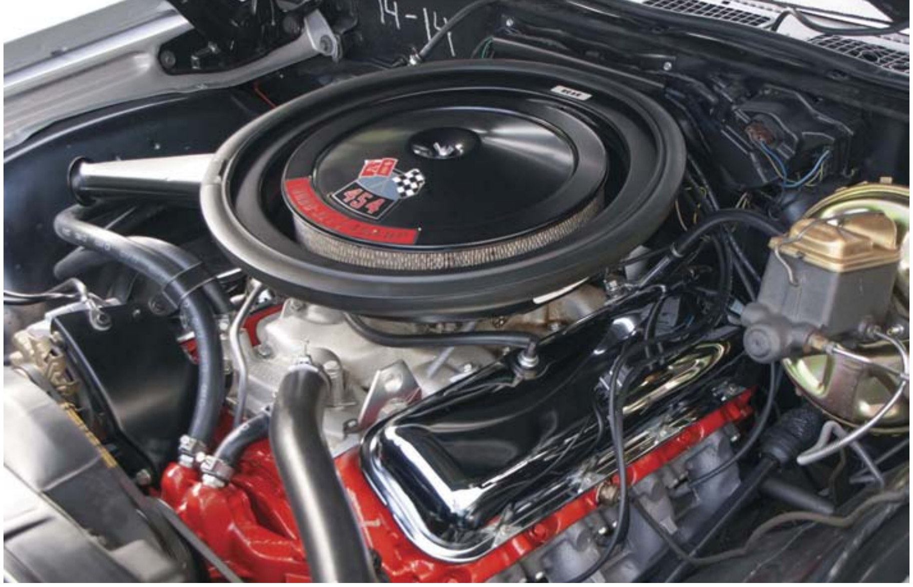
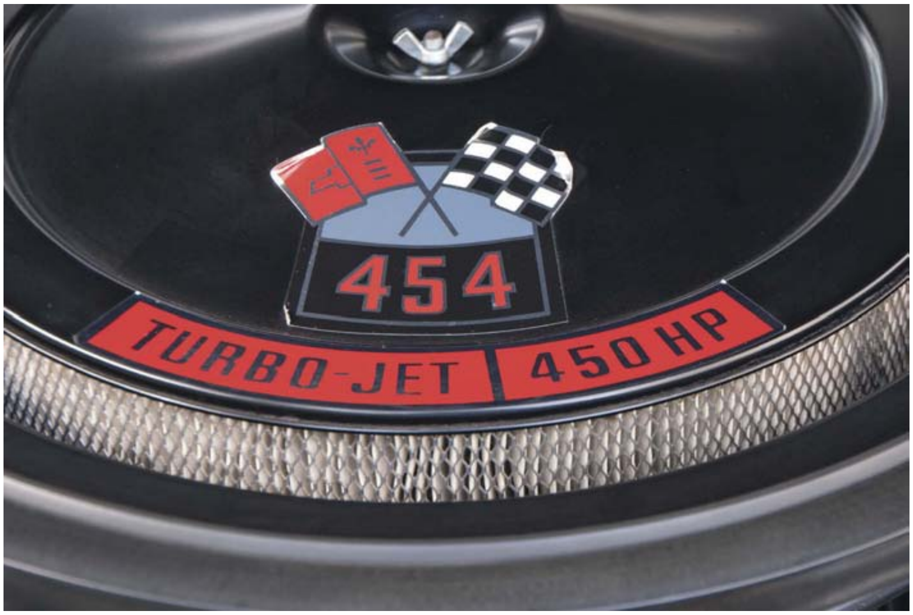
distinctive markings are visible on the cylinder heads, the firewall and on the center section of the rear axle.

Maya is not the only one who appreciates the design features of the 1970 model. The boldness of the body styling changes from the prior year are a definite statement that this Chevelle was powerful; the blunt front end, with an SS-specific blacked-out grille creates an in-your-face attitude. Seen from the side, the bodywork reveals a less than subtle muscular emphasis around the front and rear fenders. The SS-specific rear bumper has a black resilient insert. Overall, the impression is that this is a force to be reckoned with. Remarkably, Chevrolet toned down any announcement that this was its biggest Big Block, adding only an SS454 insignia to the front fender flanks. While the air cleaner had a decal that identified the 450-bhp rating, there is no identification on the vehicle that this was equipped with a special LS6 engine option.





The big-block engine compartment is accurate, from the assembly markings to the hose clamps. The air cleaner decal does not call excessive attention to the 450-bhp message. There is no indication that it is an LS6.

Since becoming part of the Maya motoring collection, the Mayas take their LS6, as they frequently do with all their unique and elegant vehicles, out for long weekend trips, touring up and down Southern California from their coastal city base. Embracing the *Putting you first, keeps us first* tag line offered by Chevrolet in their 1970 SS Chevelle advertising, Bill and Kim Maya often make their sterling LS6 their first choice. MD

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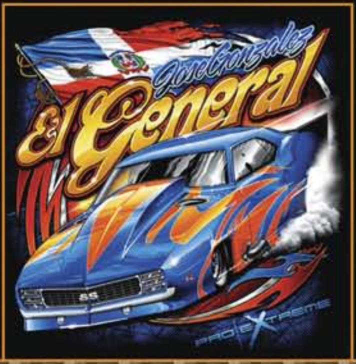
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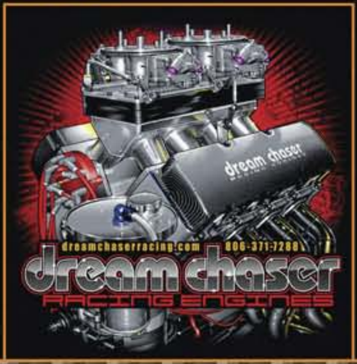
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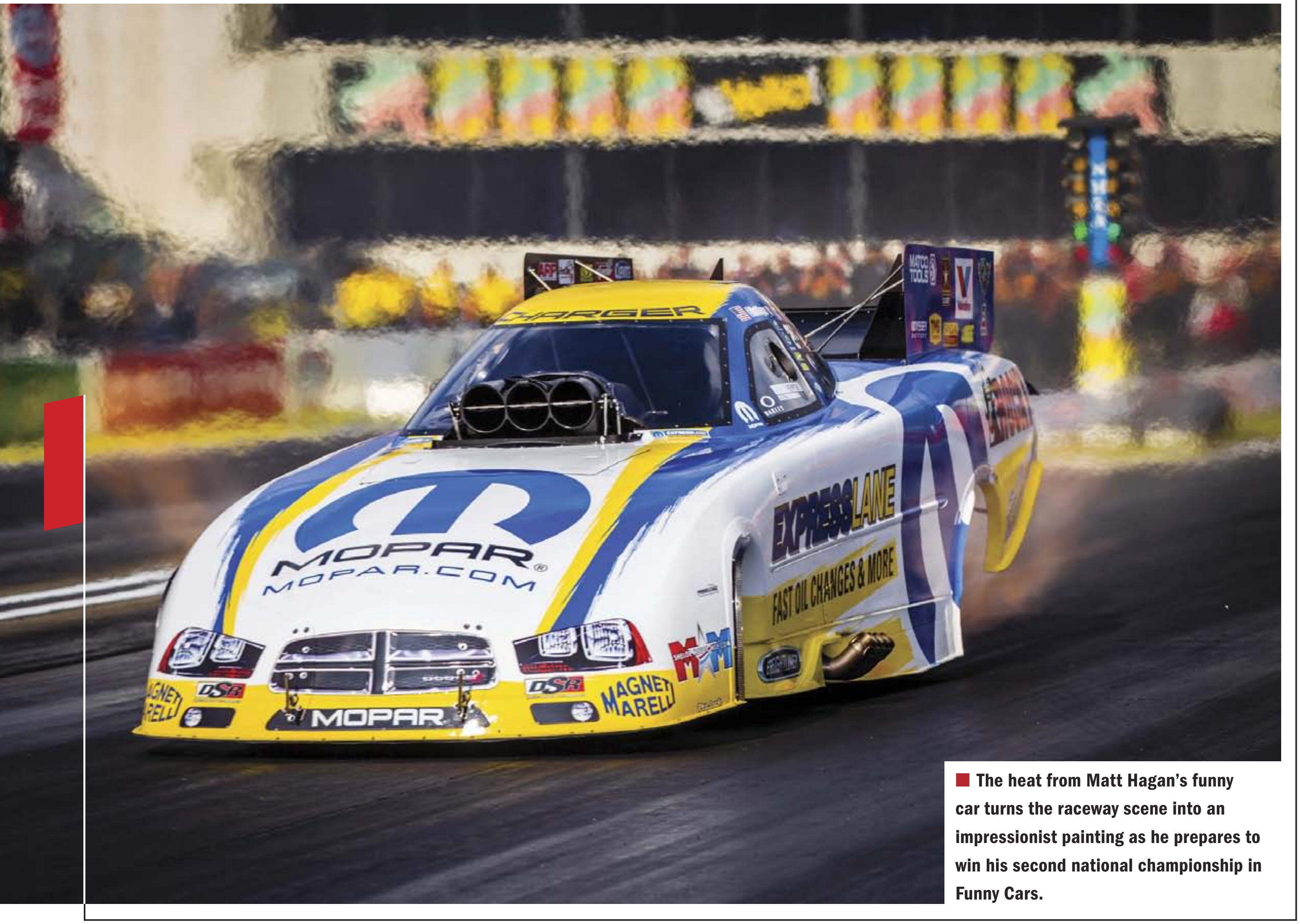
Color and Motion in the NHRA

Drag Racing Photo Gallery

The big-time drag racing season begins and ends each year at Pomona—site of the National Hot Rod Association Auto Club Finals. 2014 was the 50th annual running of this event, drawing the best in Top Fuel, Funny Car, Pro Stock and Motorcycles to compete for the biggest prize available on the quarter mile. *Maximum Drive* was on hand to document the drama. ■ **PHOTOS BY GUS ALONZO**



■ The heat from Matt Hagan's funny car turns the raceway scene into an impressionist painting as he prepares to win his second national championship in Funny Cars.

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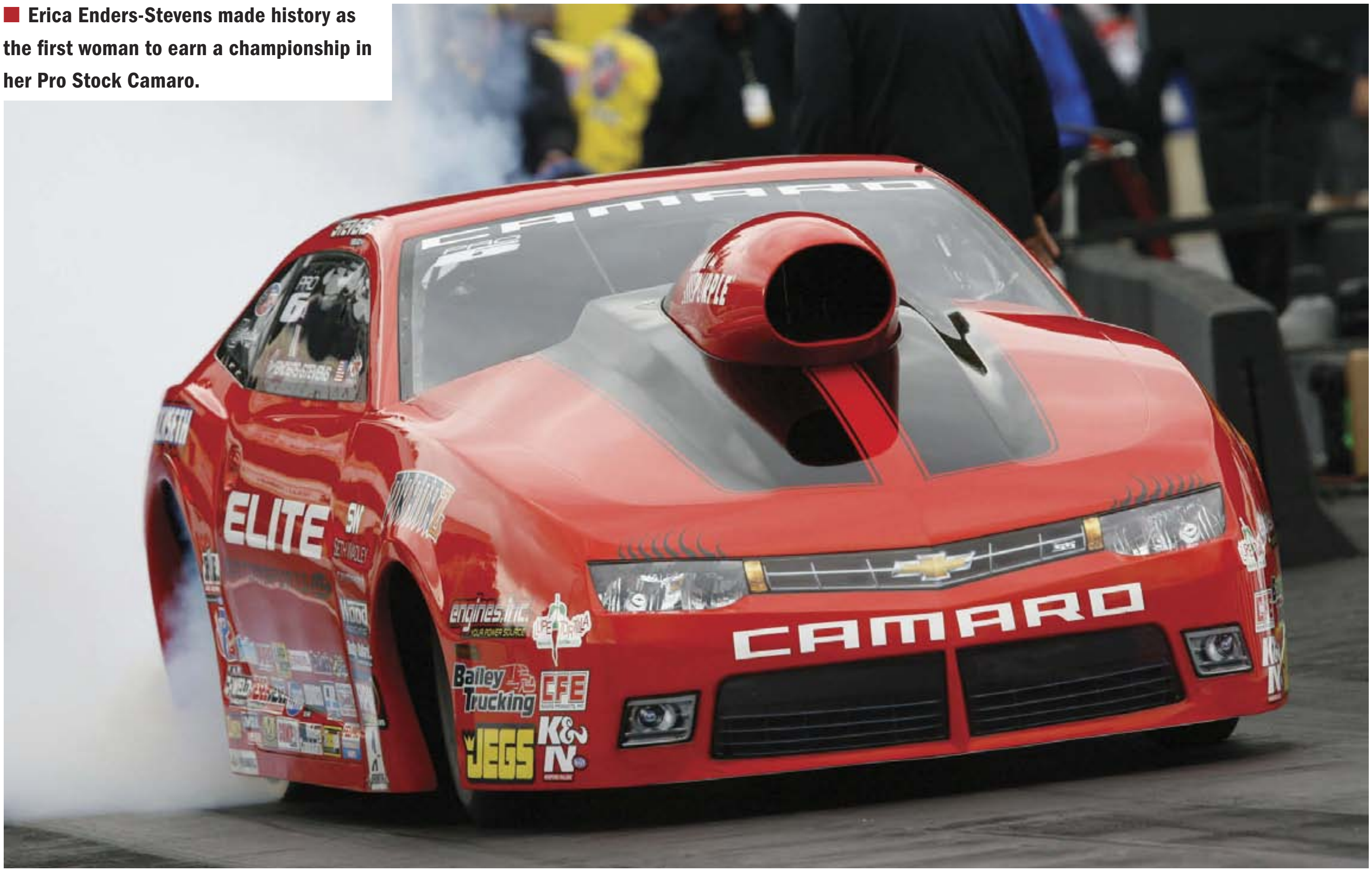
Eighteen-time Funny Car champion John Force was edged out for the championship this year, but his Castrol GTX Mustang was there for the show.



Erica Enders-Stevens made history as the first woman to earn a championship in her Pro Stock Camaro.

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The same over-engineered rocker science that has proven T&D Machine Products the very pinnacle of shaft-mount roller rocker arm technology is available for GM (Chevrolet and Pontiac) Stock Eliminator competitors, or wherever stock mounting location is mandated.

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Pictured is the set-up for a small block Chevy – other Stock Eliminator systems will differ slightly.

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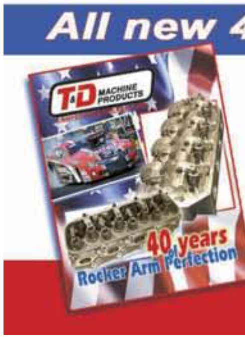

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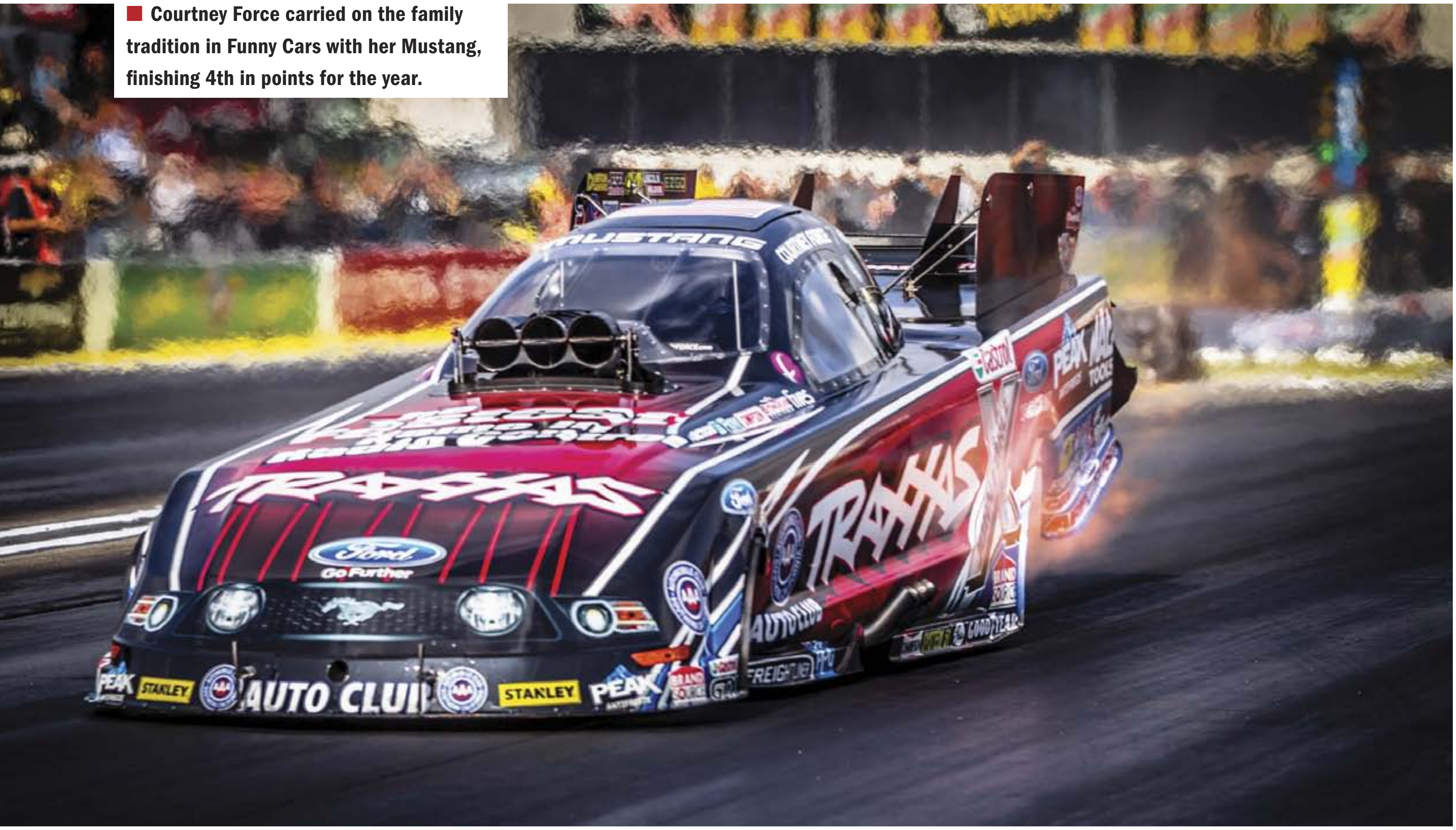

Courtney Force carried on the family tradition in Funny Cars with her Mustang, finishing 4th in points for the year.

If you could see through his helmet, Bob Bode's face would show the intense concentration necessary to stay on top of 7000 bhp in a Funny Car.

“McLeod Racing products meet my expectations to ensure that they’ll exceed Yours!”- Paul Lee,

Top Fuel Funny Car Driver &
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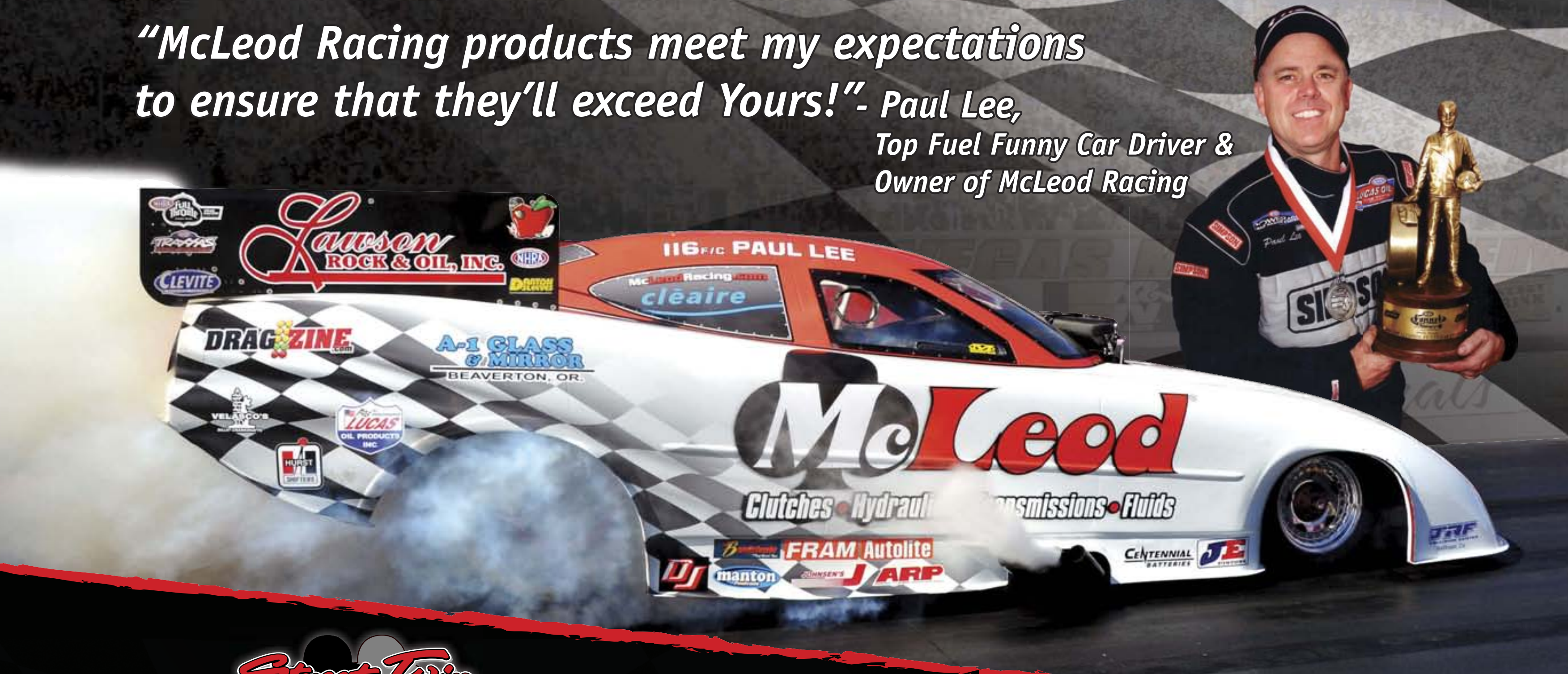
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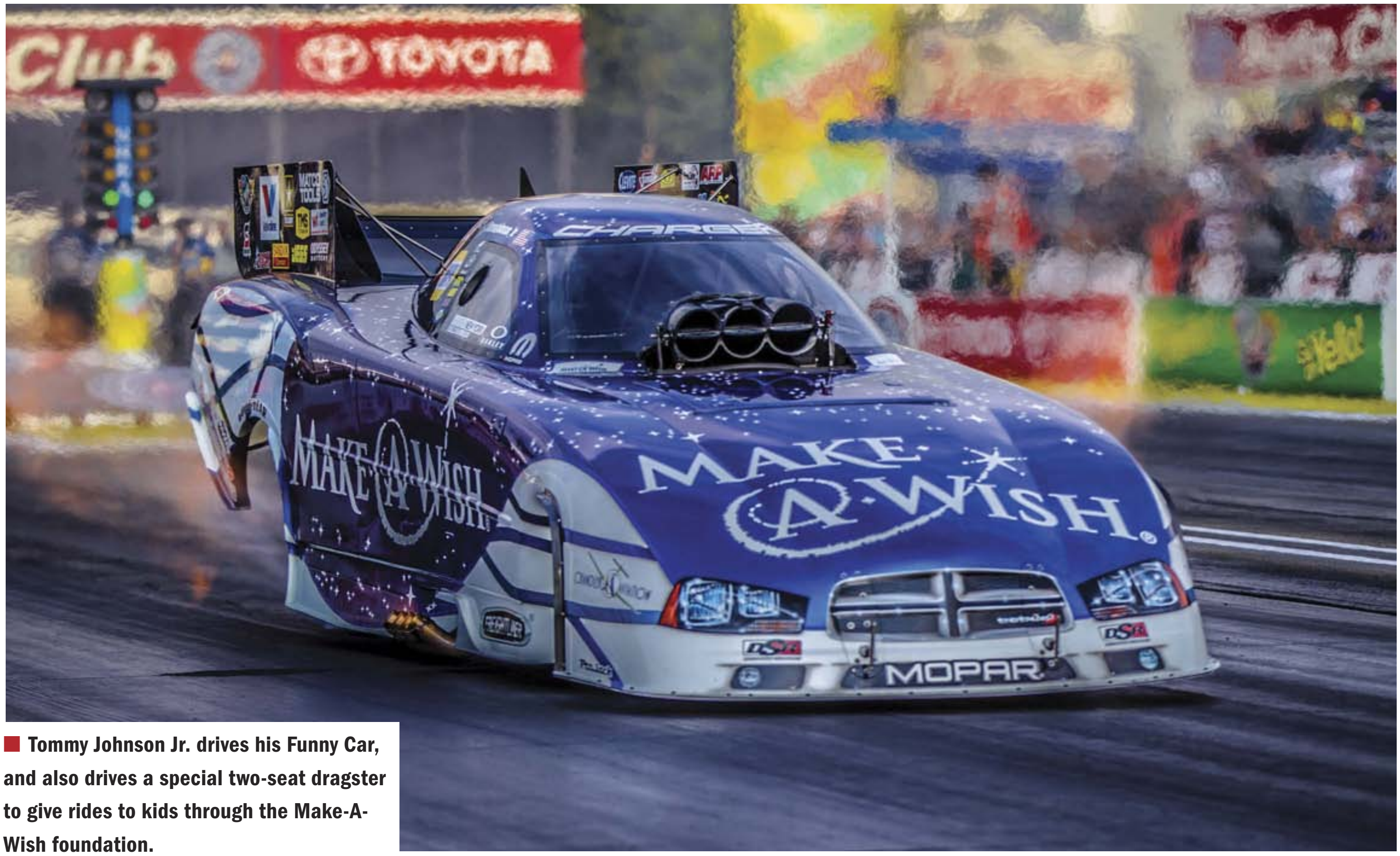

Tommy Johnson Jr. drives his Funny Car, and also drives a special two-seat dragster to give rides to kids through the Make-A-Wish foundation.

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John Force has been the leading drag racer of the last 20 years, winning 18 NHRA championships.

■ **Erica Enders-Stevens is pleased with her "Wally." Each championship trophy is a statue of NHRA founder Wally Parks.**

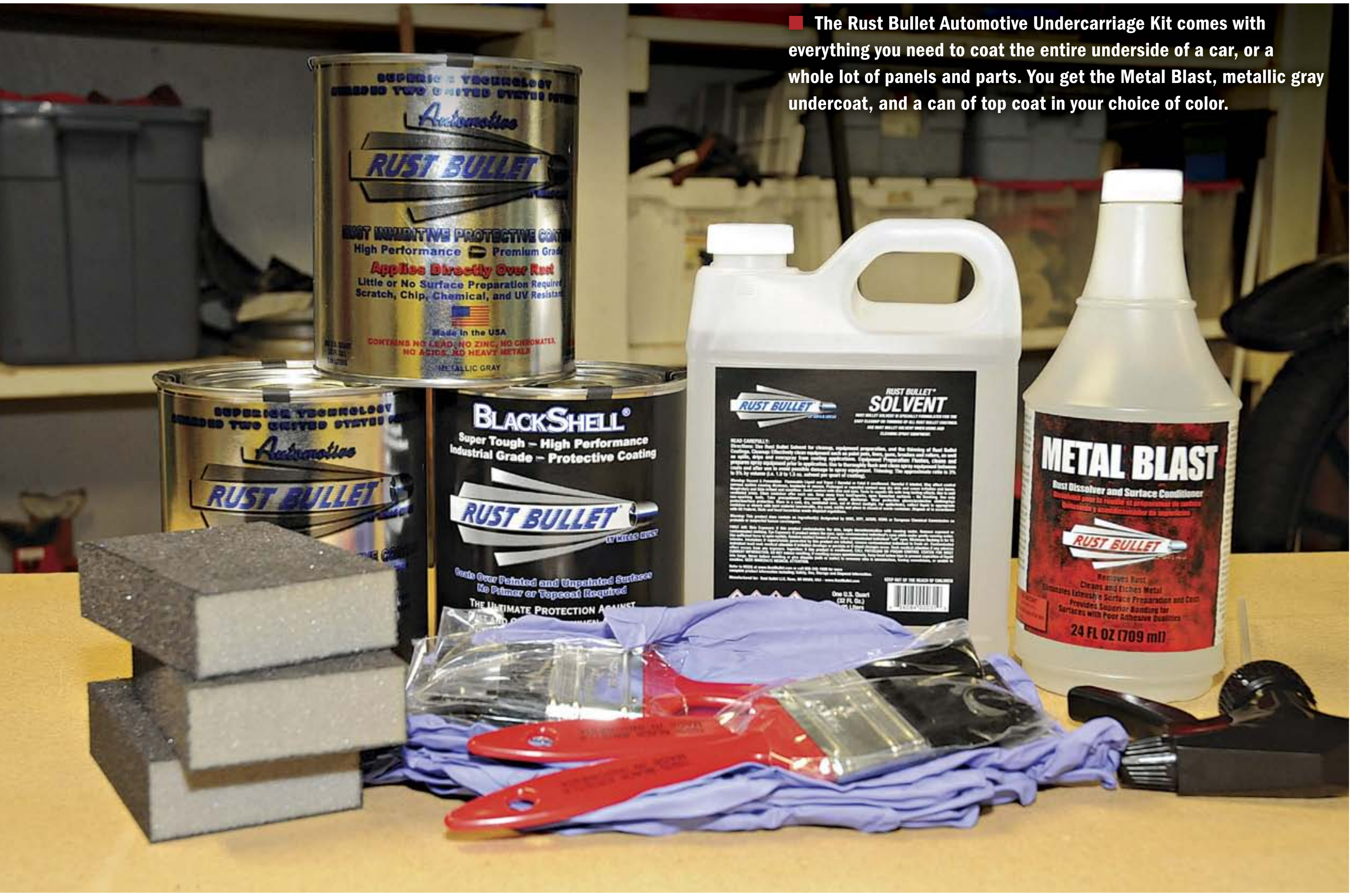
■ **Drivers get the glory, but drag racing, like all motorsports, is a team effort.**

Rusty Parts Deserve a Bullet

Rust Bullet makes metal parts restoration simple and lasting

BY JEFF ZURSCHMEIDE

■ PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR



■ The Rust Bullet Automotive Undercarriage Kit comes with everything you need to coat the entire underside of a car, or a whole lot of panels and parts. You get the Metal Blast, metallic gray undercoat, and a can of top coat in your choice of color.

It's not often that we run a straight product test and example in *Maximum Drive,* but then it's not often that we get ahold of a product like Rust Bullet. This product impressed us enough to warrant some special attention.

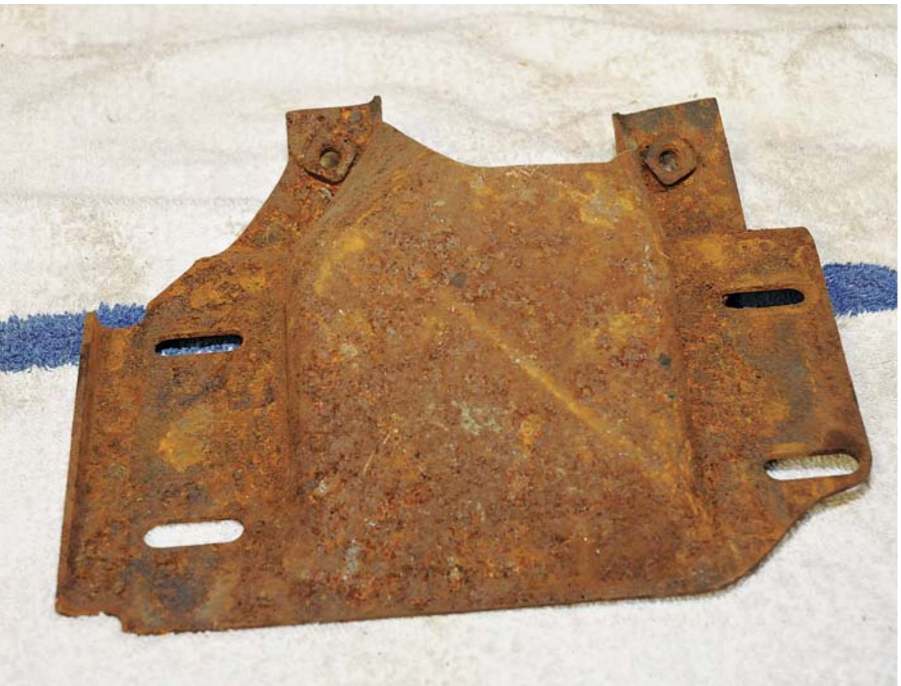
A little background is in order. We have a 1969 Corvette Stingray in the *Max Drive* garage. Nothing special, just a small-block with an automatic, but it's ours and we love it. Last year, we got the basic 350 engine sorted out to the tune of 240 RWHP and 300 lb.-ft. of torque.

This year, the project is to get the tired TH400 slush box out of there and replace it with a more interesting Muncie 4-speed. Lucky for us, Chevy makes that swap comparatively easy. You just have to change some panels on the firewall, replace the pedal assembly, bolt on the brackets for the clutch linkage and then do all the greasy work to install the new trans. We'll cover the rest of that another day, but what has us occupied today is getting the conversion parts for the firewall and chassis ready to install.

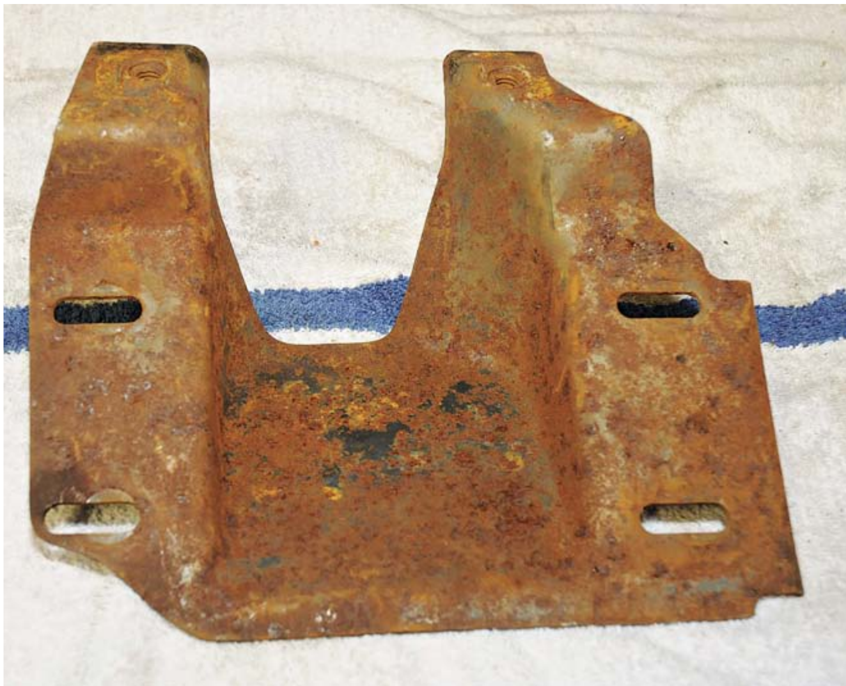
We sourced our conversion kit from a Corvette junkyard and like most junkyard parts, the plates and brackets are all

THE **RESULTS ARE SPECTACULAR** AND UNLIKE POWDER COAT, YOU DON'T NEED ANY SPECIAL EQUIPMENT TO **GET GREAT RESULTS.**

These are the fasteners for our test panel. We'll just get them de-rusted by soaking them in Metal Blast in a mason jar.



Here's one side of the panel, and it's as bad as the other one. This is going to take some serious work.



This panel is as rusty as a junkyard part can be. But we'll get it ready to dress up our firewall and last forever.

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Summer Nationals
Cordova Int'l Raceway

June 19-20
President's Cup Nationals
Maryland Int'l Raceway

June 26-28
Mopar Nationals
Grand Bend Motorplex

July 10-11
IHRA Nitro Jam Nationals
presented by Good Vibrations
Spokane County Raceway

July 17-19
Mopar Rocky Mountain
Nationals presented by Good
Vibrations and Parts Canada
Castrol Raceway

August 7-8
Northern Nationals
US 131 Motorsports Park

September 11-12
IHRA Nitro Jam Nationals
Dragway 42

October 9-10
Summit World Finals
Memphis Int'l Raceway

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covered with a good layer of surface rust. So we started looking at what to do about that. Spray paint was rejected out of hand. We want to do this job only once, and we need it to last. We strongly considered powder coat, but we needed to neutralize any remaining rust. Then we looked at epoxies and other sealant coating products, and that's where we encountered Rust Bullet. This product has multiple patents and uses a different approach from anything else on the market, so we decided to give it a try. The results are spectacular and unlike powder coat, you don't need any special equipment to get great results.

What is Rust Bullet, Anyway?

Rust Bullet is a polyurethane-based coating that neutralizes rust and seals metal to prevent new rust from forming. That's the core thing you need to know. Of course, there's more to it than that. We're product nerds, so we read safety data sheets.

If you get the automotive undercarriage kit, Rust Bullet comes with a jug of metal prep solution to dissolve rust, two cans of automotive metallic gray base coat, and a can of black topcoat paint, and the solvent you use as paint thinner. Each of these components has its own custom attributes that make Rust Bullet different from other coatings.

The Metal Blast cleaner uses phosphoric acid to dissolve surface rust, and has some detergents and corrosion inhibitors to help it clean metal effectively. The best thing about this stuff is that cleanup and neutralization happens with just plain warm water.

■ You can see the rust starts to come off the fasteners immediately on contact with the Metal Blast.

■ We put the panel into a plastic box to keep the Metal Blast under control. Spray it down thoroughly and reapply a squirt if it dries.

Rust Bullet Automotive in metallic gray is a polyurethane paint that is activated by a catalyzing chemical related to the stuff used to make crazy glue, but this particular catalyst is used to harden industrial polyurethane. Rust Bullet automotive paint also contains aluminum, which is key to its function, and some special high-grade solvents. The resin penetrates the remaining rust on the metal and sucks the water right out of the oxidized steel. The water/moisture actually cures Rust Bullet into an armor-tough finish. By dehydrating the steel and then encapsulating it in polyurethane, no new oxygen can get to the metal to create any more rust. What you end up with in the base coat is a hard polyurethane

> THE WATER/MOISTURE **ACTUALLY CURES RUST BULLET** INTO AN **ARMOR-TOUGH FINISH.** BY DEHYDRATING THE STEEL AND THEN ENCAPSULATING IT IN POLYURETHANE, **NO NEW OXYGEN CAN GET TO THE METAL** TO CREATE ANY MORE RUST.

The front side gets the same treatment. Keep it wet with Metal Blast from the spray bottle.

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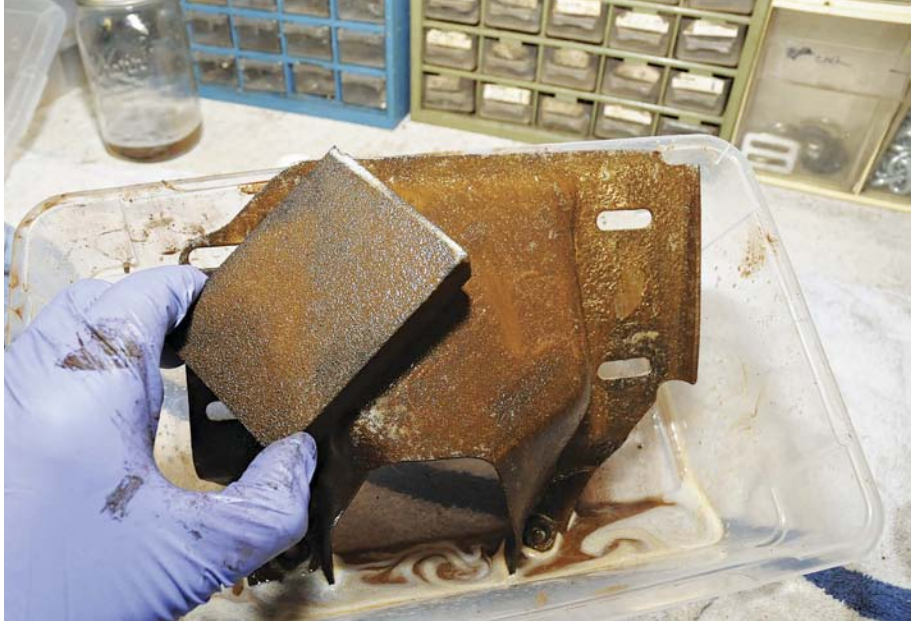
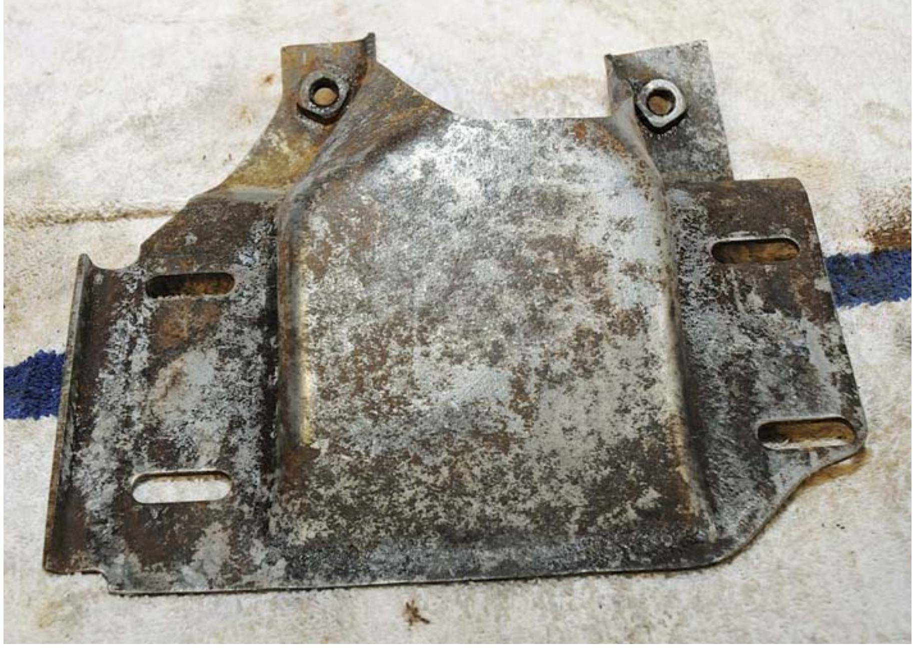


After about 20 minutes, we worked on the panel with the scrubby to get some of that loose rust off.



Within an hour, our panel looks like this. The loose rust is all gone and when it's dry, it will be ready to paint.

The backside looks just as good as the front—we're ready to paint!

shell that seals your metal parts against the elements.

The BlackShell is a different kind of paint designed specifically for surface coating. This paint uses cellulose acetate butyrate, which is a tough plastic with extra ultraviolet resistance and high-surface gloss. This material is catalyzed by another variant of the crazy glue family of chemicals. Put them together and you get a great topcoat that lasts through all kinds of abuse.

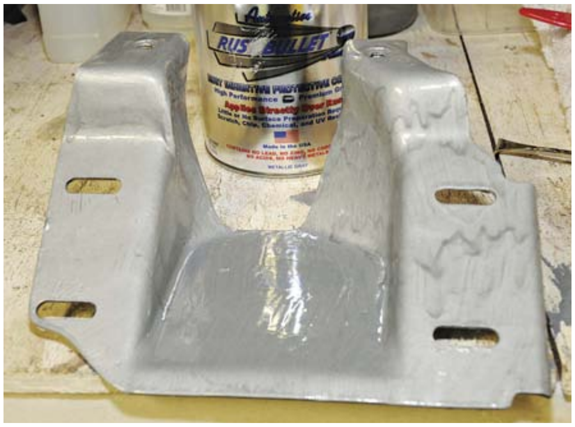
To finish this chemistry lesson, it's almost as important to note what Rust Bullet does not contain. Rust Bullet has no zinc, no lead, no chromates and no heavy metals of any kind. That's key, because it makes Rust Bullet one of the safest and environmentally friendly products you can use.

How Does Rust Bullet Work?

So, here's how it all works together. You can follow the procedure with the photos to see our actual garage results on one particularly rusty panel and some fasteners.

The Automotive Undercarriage kit from Rust Bullet includes everything you need for a project, up to and including a whole ladder frame for a car. The kit comes with two quarts of the metallic gray paint, one quart of the BlackShell paint, a bottle of Metal Blast rust dissolver, a bottle of solvent thinner, three scrub sponges, three paintbrushes and even a supply of chemical-resistant gloves. All you need is a bucket of warm water and a reasonably warm, dry, well-ventilated place to work. Metal Blast and Rust Bullet products do throw off some fumes.

The first thing you need to do is to get rid of the powdery or flaky rust on the surface of the metal. You can stick paint to the rust but



The Rust Bullet base coat goes on with a very metallic look. You can ignore a few bubbles or the iridescent look. It will smooth out as it dries

The front side would look fine in this paint, and it would be perfectly protected. But black is correct for our engine bay.

if the rust won't stick to the underlying metal, any kind of coating will come off as the rust flakes off. So start by spraying on the Metal Blast cleaner, then let it work for anywhere from 20 minutes to a couple of hours. Give it some more applications and scrub the part to help loosen the surface rust and any other grime. Then rinse with water to check your results.

TIP: Hit stubborn areas or nooks and crannies with a wire brush or wire wheel to get them as free as possible of loose rust.

When your part is completely dry, you can stir up the can of Rust Bullet Automotive and brush it onto the metal surface. You can spray it on if you have that kind of equipment, but brushing it on works perfectly well. You don't have to use too much, just enough to give the part a good coating.

The aluminum in the paint helps to create the metallic color and fill in any pits or flaws in the metal, and helps to make the resulting coating even stronger. You need two coats of the metallic gray base coat, applied about four hours apart if temperatures are normal (60–80 degrees) for indoor work.

When the base coats are well dried, you can apply the BlackShell topcoat as an option. Rust Bullet doesn't strictly need the black topcoat, but the BlackShell looks more correct for ladder frames and

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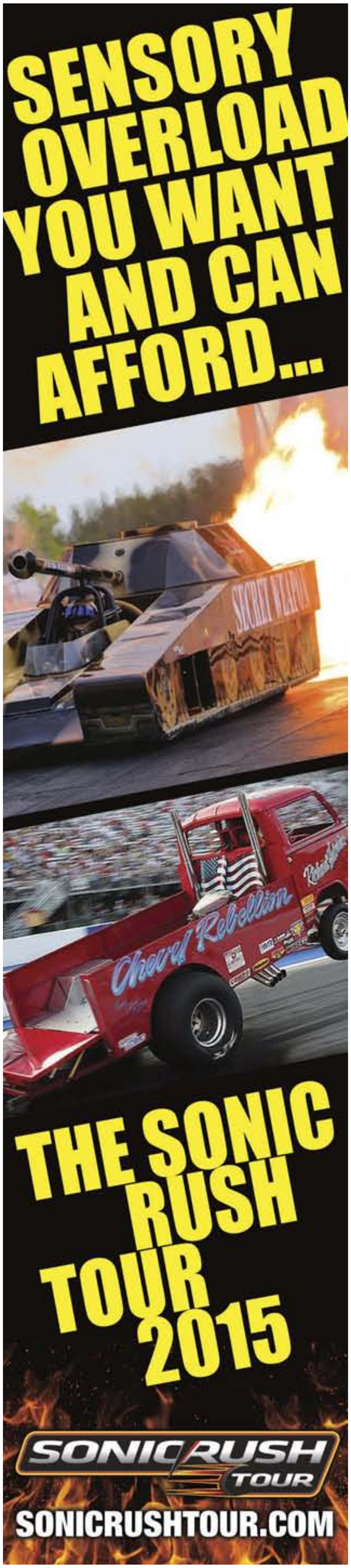

■ The BlackShell coating goes on glossy and should dry glossy. Be careful when testing it for dryness, we put a couple fingerprints into the paint when it was still tacky!

suspension components, yielding a gloss black finish that is resistant to moisture, abuse and to UV if it's subject to direct sunlight. The BlackShell topcoat goes on with the brush just like the base coats.

Rust Bullet Results

We finished our panels and brackets in a weekend, allowing plenty of drying time between coats. We took our time and coated both sides of each part, and used the Metal Blast in a glass mason jar to remove rust from our fasteners while we were at it. We didn't use a 10th of the paint and Metal Blast that came in our kit, so we're already thinking of pulling some suspension components and giving them the Rust Bullet treatment. Then there's the car-hauling trailer, then the boat trailer, you get the idea.

TIP: When it's fully cured, Rust Bullet has amazing heat resistance—up to 314 degrees Fahrenheit continuously and up to 617 degrees Fahrenheit for up to 72 hours at a time. This means you can use it in engine bays.

You can pick up the Automotive Undercarriage kit direct from Rust Bullet for $149.99. If you just have some panels and brackets to do, you might choose the Rust Bullet Automotive Double Shot for just $22.99. The Double Shot gives you two 4-ounce cans of the Metallic base coat, plus gloves and brushes. Big-time users can get the Truck Kit with three quarts of Automotive base coat and two quarts of BlackShell, plus two jugs of Metal Blast for $239.99. You can also buy Metal Blast by itself. A 24-ounce jug will set you back $19.99.

You can order all Rust Bullet products directly from the manufacturer through their website (www.rustbullet.com) and get free shipping on most orders over $75.

The bottom line is that we recommend Rust Bullet products. We use it on our own cars, and that says it all.

■ The finished product is hard, and will last indefinitely in this car. Note that we plan to run a chase through the threaded nuts welded to the panel before installation. There's no good way to keep paint out of the threads, so we'll fix that later.

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March 28-30 · Las Vegas
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April 11-13 · Charlotte, N.C.
O'Reilly Auto Parts NHRA SpringNationals
April 25-27 · Houston
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May 16-18 · Atlanta
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Attention to Detail

What is compromise when it comes to your car?

BY SCOTT FISHER ■ PHOTO BY BOB RYDER

Approximately 30 years ago or so, a major producer of high-end European automobiles proudly touted their product line as being made "without compromise." The idea was to make buyers think that these cars were made without cost-cutting, without ever substituting of a less-expensive solution in place of a more-expensive one, and to present the brand as top-of-the-line in the eyes of upscale buyers.

And those of us who have worked on a custom, modified, or racing car laughed at them and shook our heads.

Why? Because we know that every car—from the cheapest loss leader on a discount import lot to the latest road rocket halo car—is essentially a big box o' compromise. It's just not usually thought of that way. But this is a useful way to look at your choices, and a very useful way to maintain satisfaction in the long term. Let's talk about how.

Here's a simple example: rear-end gearing for the quarter mile. Do you optimize for acceleration, or for top speed? That depends on your torque curve, redline, how well it hooks up, maybe even aerodynamics if you're fast enough that drag or lift is a factor by the end of the strip. (Remember, drag racing was originally called drag racing because the first modifications involved cutting or removing body parts that stuck out into the airflow to reduce drag.)

But compromise affects virtually every area of car design, redesign, customization and modification. Think about your project: What do you want the car to do? Are you building a quarter-mile supercar? Are you just working to make a good car great, or a great car superb? Do you want it to go around corners, perhaps with passengers? Will you drive it long distances to car shows and events, or will it be trailered? And of course, how much money do you have to spend on it?

All of these questions highlight where your attention to detail—at the planning stage, the parts-buying stage, the stages of assembly and tuning and sorting—can make the difference between satisfaction and disappointment. Because it's a lot more satisfying to have a project that meets your original goals than to have a big box o' compromises, even if they're compromises that seemed like a good idea at the time. MD

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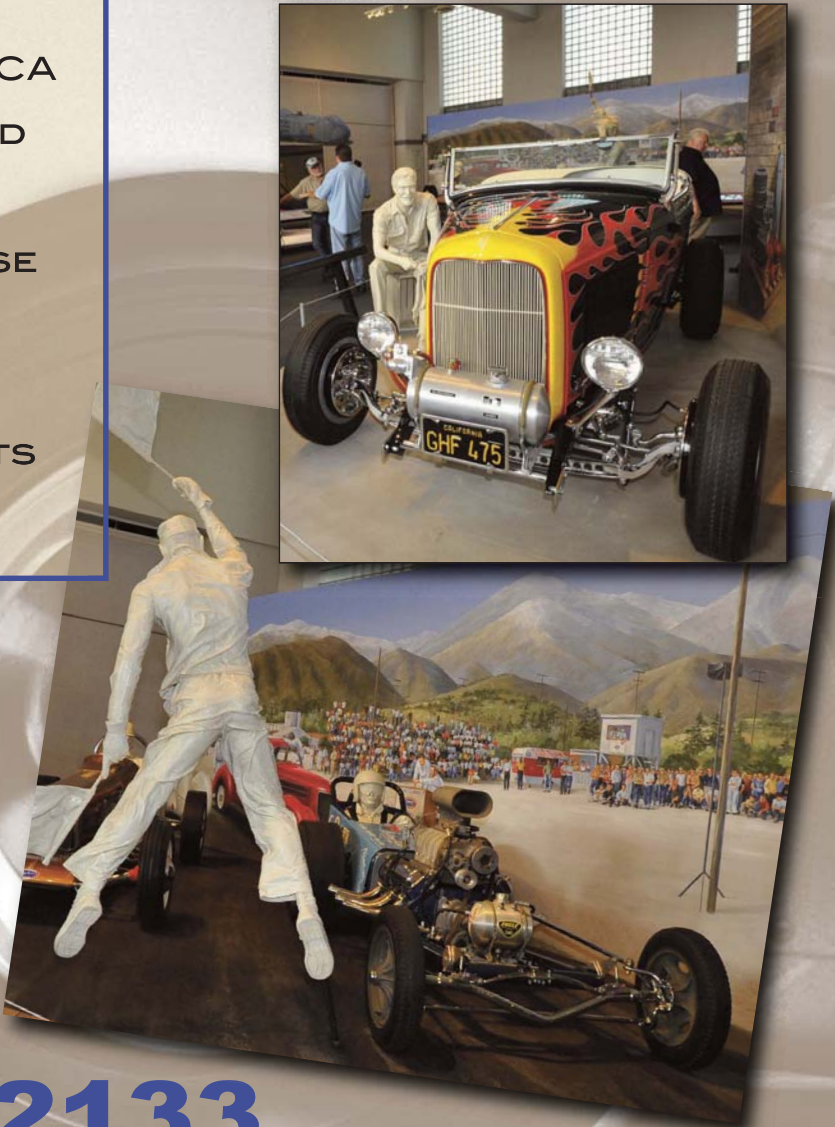

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